

## **Is Christ's Salvation Unconditional?**

Pastor Joseph Clark – September 24, 2020

“We allow, it is the work of God alone to justify, to sanctify, and to glorify, which three comprehend the whole of salvation.”

— Pastor John Wesley

Is it not wonderful news to believe that salvation lies outside ourselves?

— Martin Luther

When we see that the whole sum of our salvation, and every single part of it, are comprehended in Christ, we must beware of deriving even the minutest portion of it from any other quarter.

— John Calvin

From time to time, I will be called out by a reader of my articles, or a listener of my podcast, about phrasing that I use when I describe being “saved in Christ” or “born-again.” The phrasing which I commonly use to describe being saved or born-again is to “Choose to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, in accordance with the Gospels.” Or “In accordance with the Gospels, choose to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.” I have used this wording in my weekly Gospel videos and my sermons.

Each week I lead a Bible Study at a local seniors' care facility. Recently I delivered a closing message related to the reading and I defined how we are saved. I then conducted a Q and A. A senior lady stood up and asked, “I have attended a Catholic church all of my life and I believe in God and I treat people good. Am I not saved?” I answered referencing the Word:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” - Ephesians 2:8-9

“Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” - Romans 10:9-10

“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” - John 14:6:

I explained to her that belief in God is not enough. That good deeds do not save us. That we are saved by faith and grace. And I used the wording, “Choose to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, in accordance with the Gospels.”

She was quite frustrated by this and told me that she was never coming back to my Bible Study. And so far, she has not returned.

I have had a viewer of one of my Gospel videos reach out to me asking, “What does this mean? ‘In accordance with the Gospels?’ Are you suggesting that we are saved by our deeds and behavior? Is salvation not unconditional?”

God tells us in The Word that salvation is offered unconditionally. He tells us that it contains two elements. The Grace is offered for free from God to man. Man receives that saving Grace through Faith. God’s element is Grace. Man’s element is Faith. There is no payment made by man for salvation. Christ paid the price on the Cross.

Here is a sample of what The Word tells us about unconditional salvation:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. “

– Ephesians 2:8-9

“He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

- Titus 3:5

“Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

– Romans 10:9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.”

- Ephesians 2:8

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

- John 3:16-18

I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

- Galatians 2:21

“For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.”

- Romans 6:14

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- Romans 6:23

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life.”

- John 5:24

Jesus not only sets us free from the penalty of sin but from the power of sin. Will we still sin? Yes? Are we damned by our sin any longer? No. For our sins shall

not be master over us, we are not under the law, but under Grace. Sin no longer has dominion over us. We become acutely self-aware of our sins. Christ covers our sins. Before we are saved in Christ, sin is our master and righteousness is the exception in our lives. When we are saved in Christ, he becomes our master and sin is the exception to our lives. Sin becomes a bump in the road of our sanctification but not a roadblock or a reroute to death.

Is God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ unconditionally offered and given by God?

Yes. Absolutely. So here is where things get... confusing.

I also use this analogy frequently and you might have read it in my previous articles:

A homeless man lies on the sidewalk of a busy city street. He is wearing old, ragged clothes. He is starving. Dehydrated. Penniless. Filthy. A man walks up to him in a suit and tie. He pulls out his wallet and says. "Are you John Doe?" to which the homeless man answers, "Yes. That is my name." The suited man hands him an envelope and says, "Mr. Doe, in this envelope is a cheque made out to you for 100 million dollars. It is my gift to you."

The homeless man takes the envelope (for he has the full use of his limbs and is not handicapped in any way). He examines it and says. "I will accept your gift if you remove the cheque from the envelope."

The suited man does nothing further but simply replies, "Mr. Doe, in this envelope is a cheque made out to you for 100 million dollars. It is my gift to you."

The homeless man says. "I will accept your gift if you walk two blocks up the street to the bank, cash it for me, and bring it back to me."

The suited man does nothing further but simply replies, "Mr. Doe, in this envelope is a cheque made out to you for 100 million dollars. It is my gift to you."

The homeless man says. "I will accept your gift if you go across the street to the convenience store and buy me a pack of smokes while I examine the cheque."

The suited man does nothing further but simply replies, "Mr. Doe, in this envelope is a cheque made out to you for 100 million dollars. It is my gift to you."

The homeless man says. “I will accept your gift if you go down the block to the liquor store and buy me a bottle of bourbon while I consider if I want to accept this gift.”

The suited man does nothing further but simply replies, “Mr. Doe, in this envelope is a cheque made out to you for 100 million dollars. It is my gift to you.”

The homeless man hands the cheque back to the suited man saying. “Keep your gift, it comes with too many conditions.”

As the suited man walks away placing the envelope back into his suit pocket, the homeless man curses the suited man for leaving him without smokes and bourbon.

Who placed the conditions on whom in this story?

On the topic of His salvation God also tells us in The Word:

Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

- Matthew 7:21

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ...

- John 15, 1-27

And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

- Acts 2:38

Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’”

- John 3:5

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

- Matthew 7:13-14

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

- James 2:14-17

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

- Mark 10:25

Not everyone who says to me,” Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?” And then will I declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.”

- Matthew 7:21-23

It would seem by these statements that there are conditions to salvation. We must confess publicly, we must give our possessions to the poor, we must be baptized, we must avoid sin.... Or is that the case? Let us look a little closer. Let us examine this through the story that I just told you. However, let us reverse the roles:

A young man in a suit has spent much of his youth pursuing unequalled success. He rushes towards the bus stop in his suit, carrying his briefcase. A homeless man is waiting at the bus stop. He is dressed in ragged clothes. He looks half-starved.

Dehydrated. Penniless. Filthy. The man in the suit and tie tries to avoid eye contact with the homeless man for fear that he will be solicited for loose change. The homeless man approaches the young man. He pulls an envelope from his stinky pants' pocket, saying, "Are you John Doe?" to which the young man answers curiously, "Yes. That is my name." The homeless man hands him the envelope and says, "Mr. Doe, in this envelope is a cheque made out to you for 100 million dollars. It is my gift to you."

The young-suited man in the suit refuses to take the envelope. "It can't be this easy. What is the catch?"

The homeless man does nothing further but simply replies, "Mr. Doe, in this envelope is a cheque made out to you for 100 million dollars. It is my gift to you."

The young, suited man says. "This just isn't believable. Is this some kind of joke?"

The homeless man does nothing further but simply replies, "Mr. Doe, in this envelope is a cheque made out to you for 100 million dollars. It is my gift to you."

The young, suited man says. "Okay, smart guy. I will accept your gift if you show me something that proves that you are so rich that you can give away such money."

The homeless man does nothing further but simply replies, "Mr. Doe, in this envelope is a cheque made out to you for 100 million dollars. It is my gift to you."

The young, suited man says. "I will accept your gift if you go down the block to the bank, cash the cheque, and bring it back to me in cash."

The homeless man does nothing further but simply replies, "Mr. Doe, in this envelope is a cheque made out to you for 100 million dollars. It is my gift to you."

The young, suited man challenged the homeless man with several "If – then" statements before he would take the cheque. The homeless man continued to offer him the envelope with the cheque.

Finally, the young, suited man, said. "Look, if you show me the proof that I have asked for, I will take that envelope. Until then, quit wasting my time."

The young, suited man picked up his briefcase, and saw the public transit bus approaching in the distance. As he reached into his pocket to search for his bus pass, a stretch limo pulled up. The homeless man jumped into it, and it pulled away.

Who placed the conditions on whom in this version of the story?

Is Christ's salvation unconditional? Absolutely! 100%. But we must receive it unconditionally. If we place conditions on God, we will not be saved. Hence why we must unconditionally receive it in the manner that is in accordance with that which God instructs us as His will. In accordance with His good news. In accordance with The Word. The Gospels.

Jesus tells us that to receive eternal salvation and be justified, we must do the will of the Father. What is the will of the Father? That we choose to believe in Jesus. Believe in who He is, what He taught, what He demonstrated, and what He did and why He came.

Is believing in God enough? No. Satan believes in God. Judas Iscariot believed that Jesus walked the Earth; he might even have believed much of what Jesus said. But he did not believe IN Jesus.

We are not saved by doing. We are saved by being.

There are two kinds of believers. True Disciples and False Disciples. True converts and false converts. Is receiving Christ as your Lord and Savior enough? Not if we do not do so in accordance with His will. Not if we apply corrupt doctrine to His word. Not if we apply warped hyper-grace misinterpretations to His will. Not if we create and follow false religions about being saved by Christ that contradict His will. Not if we use His salvation as a hall pass to indulge in sin. Not if we say, "Jesus is my savior and I believe that he was an extraterrestrial from Jupiter." Not if we proclaim, "I believe in a God and that punishes vice and rewards virtue and that is enough to save me." Not if we cobble together a belief that makes us feel comfortable and does not challenge us. Not if we say, "I take the Bible with a grain of salt because it was written a long time ago and does not apply as much today." Or "I am a saved Christian, but I find most Christians to be legalistic and judgemental, so I subscribe to a liberal view of salvation that does not require me to 'pick up a cross for Christ'."



There are denominations out there today that are teaching false doctrine. There are Pastors out there today who are 95% exact in their teaching but contradict God's Word 5% of the time. That 5% of the time is like adding a teaspoon of motor oil to a well of drinking water. It spoils it. There are Pastors who are writing books and hosting radio shows and applying their own interpretation of the Gospels which fly in the face of the reality of God's will.

This is what Jesus foresaw when he said:

<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

– Matthew 7:21-23

Christ's salvation is unconditional. But all too many people place conditions on receiving it! I have encountered denominations which have taken their own interpretation of the Bible and discounted all Christians up until their present-day movement. In other words, they believe that it took two thousand years for the truth to be revealed to their founder. That all other Christians up until now... are doomed. Ironically, there are radio personalities who presently claim that what they preach is unconditional salvation in Christ, but by virtue of applying their misinterpretation of the Gospels, they place conditions on receiving salvation.

Jesus warned against this.

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

- Matthew 7:15

For false Christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

- Matthew 24:24

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So, it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

- 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

If we do not live in accordance with the Gospels, we risk discovering that we have not truly received Christ in our hearts in the first place. We risk not having been saved yet. Can one be unsaved? No. Can one not have been saved in the first place? Yes. Can one be a false disciple? Yes.

I have ministered to people whose spouses went up to the altar, publicly witnessed, then turned around and dropped their Christian faith to pursue Yoga, or Freemasonry, or whatever their next “feel good self-help” fix is.

The Bible is all that we need. We do not need to read books about how to unlock hidden meanings in the Bible.

“For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,”

- Hebrews 10:26

There are preachers right now who are stating that the Lord’s Prayer is no longer applicable or relevant after Christ’s death on the Cross. There are preachers who are preaching that we no longer need to confess our sins once we have been born-again.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- 1 John 1:9

Satan’s sneakiest trick is not in the form of Satanists who make their alliances known. It is in the form of corrupt doctrine which leads astray those who would otherwise be faithful children of God. Faithfully following God’s Will.

Those who seek to be saved with exceptions to God’s Will are seeking the pain-free diet, the easy path, the guilt-free path, the path in which they do not have to feel conflicted about their sin, the path in which they feel no further accountability to

God. They seek to not only accept the price that Jesus paid on the Cross, but they seek to stick Him with a further bill for how they receive Him. Many seek a “feel good” ministry. A self-improvement ministry. A prosperity ministry. A church which requires as much secrecy as a fraternity or sorority. A church that challenges all other Christians with their unique interpretation. A church whose founder was corrupt.

The only way to receive Christ is in accordance with the Gospels. It is there and there alone, where God’s Will has been explained to us. We must unconditionally receive his unconditional gift.

By Grace alone. By Faith alone. In Christ alone. Unconditionally given. Unconditionally accepted.

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